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Invention: ENTERTAINMENT PROCESS BASED ON COMPETITION GAMES WITH
MULTIPLE CHOICES

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SPECIFICATION

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ENTERTAINMENT PROCESS BASED ON COMPETITION GAMES WITH
MULTIPLE CHOICES

Field of the invention

This invention relates to an entertainment process based on competition games with questions with multiple choice answers related to audio or visual recordings (film, video clip, plays, etc.).

Background of the invention

Games based on the musical knowledge of players are known in prior art, and particularly radio or television games. For example, the game is of the questions/answers type during which a player must for example give the name of an artist, the title or the next word of a song from which a short extract is played. In this type of game, questionnaires are prepared before the game and the game takes place either with a single player, or in the case of a television game with several competitors in the same place and competing on the same question.

Objects and summary of the invention

Therefore, the purpose of this invention is to overcome the disadvantages of prior art by proposing an entertainment process based on the music theme by which players in places remote from each other can participate in contest games based on the music theme.

This purpose is achieved using an entertainment system based on multiple choice competition games, characterized in that it comprises at least one terminal including connection means to a dedicated remote server, the system also comprising means of playing an extract of a recording with a configurable duration on at least one terminal comprising means of reproducing the recording, means of interaction with a user and means of connection with a dedicated remote server, means of asking a

terminal user a question and suggesting multiple choice answers, the question being related to information characteristic of the extract of the recording, and the recording being selected by means independent of the terminal user.

Another objective is to be able to assign prizes as a function of the classification of participants (prize = free songs, free drink, free participation in the next competition).

This purpose is achieved using an entertainment system like that defined above and characterized in that each terminal comprises means of selecting and validating the terminal user's answer, validation means that update a results file containing information representative of the answer chosen by the user, this file being transmitted to the server by each terminal, to count the score achieved by each user and to classify users.

Another objective of the invention is to propose an entertainment process based on the music theme, in which players located in places remote from each other can participate in games tournaments on the music theme.

This purpose is achieved by an entertainment process based on multiple choice competitive games characterized in that it comprises:

a step in which an extract of a recording with a variable duration is played on a terminal equipped with reproduction means,

a step in which a question related to the extract is created using the terminal interaction means including proposed multiple choice answers, the recording being selected independently of the terminal user.

Another purpose of the invention is to take account of author copyrights when the games include sound or visual reproductions of all or some musical or visual recordings.

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2, 3 of terminals connected to the multiservice server. For example, a multiservice server may be a cellular telephony operator, an Internet access supplier, an access supplier to a cable television network or a satellite network. In this case, the terminal 3 may be a cellular telephone, or a decoder connected to a television or a personal computer. Similarly, a terminal (2) may be an audiovisual reproduction system as described in patent applications EP786121 and EP974896.

Each terminal 2, 3 comprises at least storage means associated with stored information processing means, for example in the form of compressed and encrypted recordings of programs or program and message modules and means 22, 32 of interaction with the user. The interaction means 22, 32 include a display means such as a screen, and at least one selection means, for example chosen from a touch screen, a pointer such as a mouse, browser key in a menu, or a voice control system.

The principle of the entertainment process according to the invention is to run a game program starting by a button triggered by or on interactive means and based on a multichoice questionnaire on a theme, for example music. The specific feature of this questionnaire is that is it based on the collection of information in a database 13, 23 stored on the dedicated server 1 and possibly on a specific terminal 2. In this case, the specific terminal 2 is an audiovisual reproduction system like that defined in patent application EP786121 and EP974896. The database 13, 23 comprises at least information relative to music extracts. In particular, the database comprises at least one table including titles of recordings, artists, the author(s), disk or recording publishers, the year of issue and any other information characterizing the visual or musical recording. Furthermore, the database 13, 23 includes all or some of the data necessary for audio reproduction of

Questionnaires are usually generated in two ways.

In another example, the question consists of recognizing the song from an audio extract of it.

Each screen corresponding to each question is generated as follows. Firstly, the game module 14, 24, 34 comprises selection means 141, 241, 341 for example comprising a program module or sub-module to select a recording, for example a musical recording, at random from the recordings in the database 13, 23. For example, this random selection can be made using a unique identification number assigned to each recording. The chosen identification number must be the number of a recording for which the party entitled to royalties has given its agreement for the recording to be used in a game. In order to do this, a flag is defined for each recording in the database 13, 23 indicating that the recording cannot be used for a game. Thus, after selecting a recording identification number at random, the selection means 141, 241, 341 verify that a flag is present. If the flag is not present, the selection means

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recording collected by the extraction module, on the audio reproduction means on the terminal.

In a first variant, the question could simply consist of a predetermined text such as the following:

5 "What is the title of this recording?" or "Who is singing this song?" or "When was this film released?".

In a second variant, the question may also comprise information about the reproduced recording, for example to build up a clue to the right answer.

10 In this case, the game module 14, 24, 34 comprises means 142, 242, 342, for example a program module in the database 13, for the collection of at least two determined items of information (INF 1, INF 2) about the recording selected at random. These two determined items
15 of information may either be of the same type for the entire questionnaire, or they may vary at random from one question to the other depending on the type of game module 14, 24, 34. A first information (INF 1) collected is then used by a graphic sub-module of the game module
20 to enter the question in the generated screen. The question includes an invariable text and a part corresponding to the first collected information (INF 1). For example, one question type is as follows:

"In what year did "INF 1" sing this song?".

25 In this example, INF 1 is the name of the artist who sang the replayed song.

"Who produced this film in "INF 1"?".

In the second example, INF 1 is the year in which the extract from the film from which the extract was
30 taken.

In both of the variants described above, the screen generated by the graphic sub-module of the game module 14, 24, 34 also comprises at least two selection areas showing the possible choices of an answer to the question
35 asked, for example in the form of the multiple choice answer. Among these selection areas, a first area

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Similarly, the recording chosen at random to create the question can be chosen among one type of recording instead of among all recordings in the database, for example all questions may relate to the same style, the same author or the same artist.

The advantage of the game module according to the first variant is that each questionnaire is different for each game and that each questionnaire is made automatically and unpredictably. Therefore, it is impossible to know what questions will be asked in advance.

When the database 13 is not stored on the terminal 3, the game module 34 includes a communication sub-module 344 that builds up messages to interrogate the database 13 on the dedicated server 1 in order to receive information necessary for generation of the question screen, namely determined information about an extract of a recording selected at random to build the question and the corresponding answer and the information selected at random, for example in the same type of recording or in recordings made at the same period, to form the wrong answers. Thus, messages sent by terminals include selection commands to be used by a module for management of the database 13 on the server 1. The messages also comprise the address of the sending terminal. The server 1 also includes a sub-module 101 for creating and transmitting messages to transmit the result of the collection made by the database manager, to the sending terminal. When it receives the answer from the server, the communication sub-module 344 of the terminal 3 extracts the information collected in the database so that the terminal graphic module 39 can use it to generate the question screen.

Similarly, in another variant, the game module is located on the dedicated server 1 and the questionnaire is started by a command sent by the terminal 2 to start

the game module 14 that, in this case only, comprises a start module 30 to start the game with the server to activate a game start button controlled by interactive means. In this variant embodiment, the server 1

5 comprises a communication module that generates messages comprising information representative of the display corresponding to the question screen. A graphic module 39 of the terminal is designed to interpret messages sent by the server to create question screens as described

10 above. When a question includes a sound or visual reproduction of an extract from a recording corresponding to the question, the server sends information representative of the audio or visual extract in the message, with a command to play this extract.

15 Information representing the audio extract is in compressed and coded form if the terminal is equipped with decompression and decoding means, or in plain text if the terminal is only capable of decompression.

When the graphic sub-module of the terminal displays

20 the multiple choice answer screen, the user (in other words the player) is prompted to answer the question using interaction means by pointing to the answer of his choice. When the game module 14 is located on a dedicated server 1, selection or validation of a

25 selection in a selection area will cause a message to be sent containing the identifier of the chosen answer and information to identify the terminal or the player and activating a comparison sub-module 145, 245 on the server 1. When the game module 24, 34 is stored on the terminal

30 2, 3, selecting or validating the selection of an area on the screen by interaction means will cause activation of a comparison module 145, 245 stored on the terminal 2, 3. In both cases, the comparison sub-module 145, 245 compares the position of the area selected by the player,

35 and for example corresponding to the address of a stored response, with the right answer. This sub-module then

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The results file 15, 25, 35 may also comprise information identifying the type and degree of difficulty of the questionnaire. The type of questionnaire depends on the style, for example the style of music (country, rock, rap) about which the questions are asked.

The results file 15, 25, 35 is stored either on the special terminal 2, 3 or on the dedicated server 1. If it is on the dedicated server, whenever the player selects an answer, a sub-module stored on terminal 2 generates a message containing information representative of the position of the selected area, this message is then sent to the dedicated server 1 by the terminal 2, 3 with the terminal identifier and the server uses the comparison module 145, 245 to determine if the answer is right.

After the results file 15, 25, 35 has been updated, or at the same time, the game module 14, 24, 34 generates a new screen containing a new question.

At the end of the questionnaire, in other words when a determined number of question screens has been displayed, the results file 25, 35 stored on the terminal 2, 3 is sent to the dedicated server 1 through the communication network 4.

The results files 15, 25, 35 transmitted by terminals or stored by the dedicated server 1 are processed by a classification module 11 stored on the server 1, firstly to extract information representative of the results achieved by the user of each terminal, and secondly to update a classification of the different players as a function of the scores that they have achieved in answering the questionnaires. As already described, the results files 15, 25, 35 may comprise information representative of the type of music on which the questionnaire is based, and/or the degree of difficulty. Thus, the player classification may be determined as a function of the type of questionnaire,

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A second means of creating the questionnaire consists of creating each question screen in advance. Thus, all questions in each questionnaire are known in advance. However, each question is applicable to a recording for which characteristic information (title, artist, etc.) is stored in the database 13, 23. Consequently, for this questionnaire, each screen contains the text of the question and a command to collect at least one item of information about the recording referred to in the question and contained in the database 13, 23. In the same way as in the first variant, the question screen comprises a first selection area containing the text for the right answer and at least one second selection area containing the text for a wrong answer. The text in the selection areas corresponding to the wrong answers may be obtained either by means of a command to collect determined information from the database, or it may consist of a predetermined text, or may be obtained by means of a random selection command to select information in the database.

For example, one question could be based on the principle consisting of finding the missing word or information in a recording in which the player is asked to find the missing information. In order to do this, the game module 14, 24, 34 comprises a sub-module to process the extract and to mute or hide part of the image of a portion of the extract of the recording when it is reproduced by the game module, in addition to the module for extraction of information representative of the audio or video reproduction of the recording.

As already explained, the extraction module retrieves information representative of an extract from the recording with a given duration, starting from a given moment of the recording. The processing sub-module is configured to mute or hide the extract while it is being reproduced at a given instant of the extract and

Thus, a question of this type comprises firstly a command sent to an extraction sub-module 143, 243 to retrieve information representing the extract from the chosen recording containing the information to be found, from the database. Secondly, the question includes a mute or hide command sent to the processing sub-module, for example to eliminate the sound volume of the determined portion of the extract being reproduced, or to hide a portion of the image. Thirdly, the question may include a command sent to the collection sub-module 142, 242, 342 to extract the name of the song and/or the artist and/or the publisher and/or any other information characterizing a recording in order to build up the question.

In another variant, for example in the case in which information representing the audio reproduction of the recording is not stored in the database, the questionnaire includes firstly data representing the extract from the recording also including mixing of the sound signal or a volume reduction corresponding to the missing words. Secondly, a command to play these data on the audio reproduction means of the terminal 2, 3.

30 Player responses are managed in the same way as
before. Thus, for each answer, the results file is
updated by a comparison module 145, 245 in the game
module. Similarly, the dedicated server 1 classifies
players in the same way and transmits the classification
35 results to each player.

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When the terminal 3 is not equipped with means of payment, the game module will not be activated until after a communication with the dedicated server 1. As explained above, information is collected from the database on the dedicated server 1 to generate the screens on the terminal. Access to the database is then preceded by a terminal authentication procedure. Thus, the terminal must be identified by the server before it can access the database. For example, this identification is assigned when a subscription procedure is performed before the first time that the terminal is connected to the server. This subscription procedure may include a payment step during each new connection, in which case the dedicated server 1 asks the terminal for its identification to authorize access to the database.

In one variant embodiment of the invention, the player has at least one joker to help him choose his answer. For example, a joker can be selected by using a virtual button represented on the question screen

displayed on the display means of the terminal 2, 3 and pointed at by the user using interaction means. Selecting a joker starts a sub-module 146, 246, 346 that modifies at least one element of the question to make the player's answer easier.

For example, this joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 can cause reproduction of the extract of the recording with different parameters, for example by increasing the duration of the extract. In this case, and for this question only, the extraction module parameter file is modified so that the data extracted from the database result in a longer extract from the recording.

In another example, the joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 modifies the display screen, for example by hiding at least one selection area containing a wrong answer.

In another example, the joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 gives the right answer and considers that the player has given the right answer.

This joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 also includes a file forming a joker counter and containing information representative of the number of jokers available. This file is updated at the beginning of the game, for example, with a predetermined number of jokers. Every time that the user selects the virtual button to validate a joker, the joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 checks if the available number of jokers is equal to zero, and if it is not the sub-module decrements the number of jokers by one. Otherwise, the joker sub-module 146, 246, 346 displays a message stating that the jokers credit is exhausted. In one variant embodiment, the jokers counter is initialized to zero at the beginning of the game. When the user selects the virtual button to select a joker for the first time, a jokers payment screen is displayed inviting the player to pay an amount of money to obtain at least one joker. The jokers counter is updated to include the new number of jokers, depending on

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server 1, means of asking a terminal user a question, suggesting multiple choice answers, the question being related to information characteristic of the extract from the recording, the recording being selected by selection means independent of the terminal user.

According to another feature, each terminal comprises means for the user of the terminal 2, 3 to select and validate his answer, the validation means updating a results file 15, 25, 35 containing information representative of the answer chosen by the user, this file being transmitted to the server 1 by each terminal 2, 3 to count the score made by each user to classify the users.

According to another feature, the played extract from the recording and the information necessary to create the question about information characteristic of the extract from the recording and the multiple choice answers are stored in a database stored on storage means on the server 1 or on storage means on the terminal 2.

Similarly, the entertainment process according to the invention is characterized in that it comprises:

a step in which an extract of a recording is played, for a variable duration, on a terminal provided with reproduction means,

a step in which a question related to the extract is created using the terminal interaction means 2, 3, suggesting multiple choice answers, the recording being selected independently of the terminal user.

According to another feature, the process also comprises:

- a step in which a results file 15, 25, 35 is sent by each terminal to a dedicated server 1 containing information representative of the answer chosen by the user using interaction means, to count the score made by each user to classify users.

According to another feature, the recording on which determined information is collected is selected at random in a database stored either on the server or on the terminal.

According to another feature, a log file is updated every time that an extract of a recording is reproduced in a screen of the questionnaire, the log file contains the identification of the recording and the number of times that the recording has been played, the log file is transmitted periodically to the server 1 that calculates royalties to be paid to the various authors.

According to another feature, the step in which a joker is selected and validated is preceded by a payment step in which the user is invited to pay an amount of money to obtain a determined number of jokers.

Persons experienced in the subject will realize that many other specific embodiments of this invention would be possible, without going outside the scope of the invention as claimed. Consequently, the various embodiments must be considered as illustrations, but can be modified within the scope defined in the attached claims, and the invention cannot be limited to the details given above.